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DIRECTORATE OF
INTELLIGENCE

MEMORANDUM

The Situation in Vietnam

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109

30 March 1967

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Information as of 1600
30 March 1967

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HIGHLIGHTS

The South Vietnamese Government's new National Reconciliation Program will be inaugurated in a 1 April ceremony.

I. The Military Situation in South Vietnam:
Viet Cong guerrillas may use electrically detonated river mines against the increased allied effort to control the waterways of the Mekong Delta (Paras. 1-3). Villagers in Darlac Province resist Viet Cong taxation, [REDACTED] (Paras. 4-5).

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II. Political Developments in South Vietnam:
Chief of State Thieu will inaugurate the government's National Reconciliation Program, intended to encourage high-level Viet Cong defections, at a ceremony on 1 April marking the promulgation of the constitution (Paras. 1-3).

III. North Vietnamese Military Developments:

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[REDACTED] A captured prisoner from the [REDACTED] reported relatively high desertion rates while his unit was still in North Vietnam (Paras. 4-6).

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IV. Other Communist Military Developments: There is nothing of significance to report.

V. Communist Political Developments: Peking's first public reference to UN Secretary General Thant's peace proposal was broadcast on 30 March (Paras. 1-2).

VI. Other Major Aspects: Photography has confirmed reports by aerial observers that Route 922 in the Laos panhandle has been extended into South Vietnam (Paras. 1-2).

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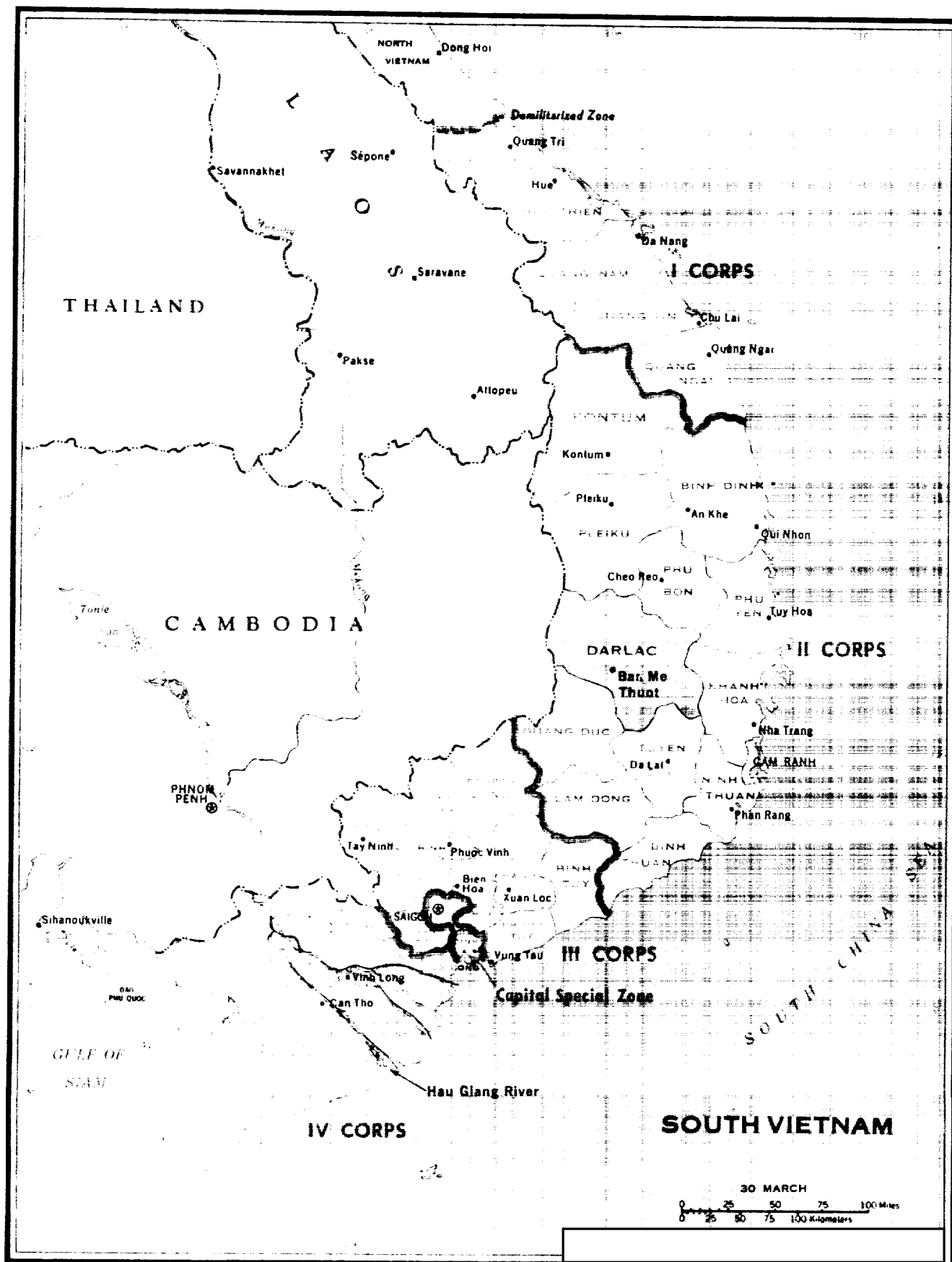
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ANNEX:

South Vietnam Battle Statistics
1963 thru week of 19-25 March 1966:
-Weapons and Personnel Losses
-Viet Cong Attacks and Incidents

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I. THE MILITARY SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. The Viet Cong may be attempting to use mines in the waterways of the southern Mekong Delta provinces. On 23 March, a group of Viet Cong guerrillas reportedly placed several electrically detonated mines in the Hau Giang River--the first detected effort this far south.

2. This type of mine is fired by remote control from positions either in boats or from ashore. The principal advantage is that it allows the user to select a particular boat as a target.

3. However, limitations such as tides, currents, and waterborne traffic affect the placement of this type mine. According to captured enemy documents, these mines can be manufactured locally using TNT. Simpler electrically detonated mines can also be constructed from mortar shells. Mines of simpler construction have been used by the Communists in the Saigon shipping channels mainly in an attempt to block shipping lanes between Saigon and the sea. These early attempts at river mining in the delta are probably designed to harass the growing allied effort aimed at controlling the waterways of the delta provinces.

Resistance to Viet Cong Taxation

4. A group of villagers forced to attend a Viet Cong meeting on 19 March near Ban Me Thuot in Darlac Province refused to furnish support to the Viet Cong, [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] The villagers argued that they lacked weapons and that they feared possible allied reaction. [REDACTED] this resistance occurred despite VC appeals, threats, and promises to return later to hold indoctrination courses.

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5. Popular resistance to VC "tax" levies in Darlac Province has been reported previously [REDACTED] but such refusals [REDACTED]

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have usually been based on personal economic difficulties. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] South Vietnamese and US forces are located nearby and that this may have encouraged the villagers to resist the VC demands.

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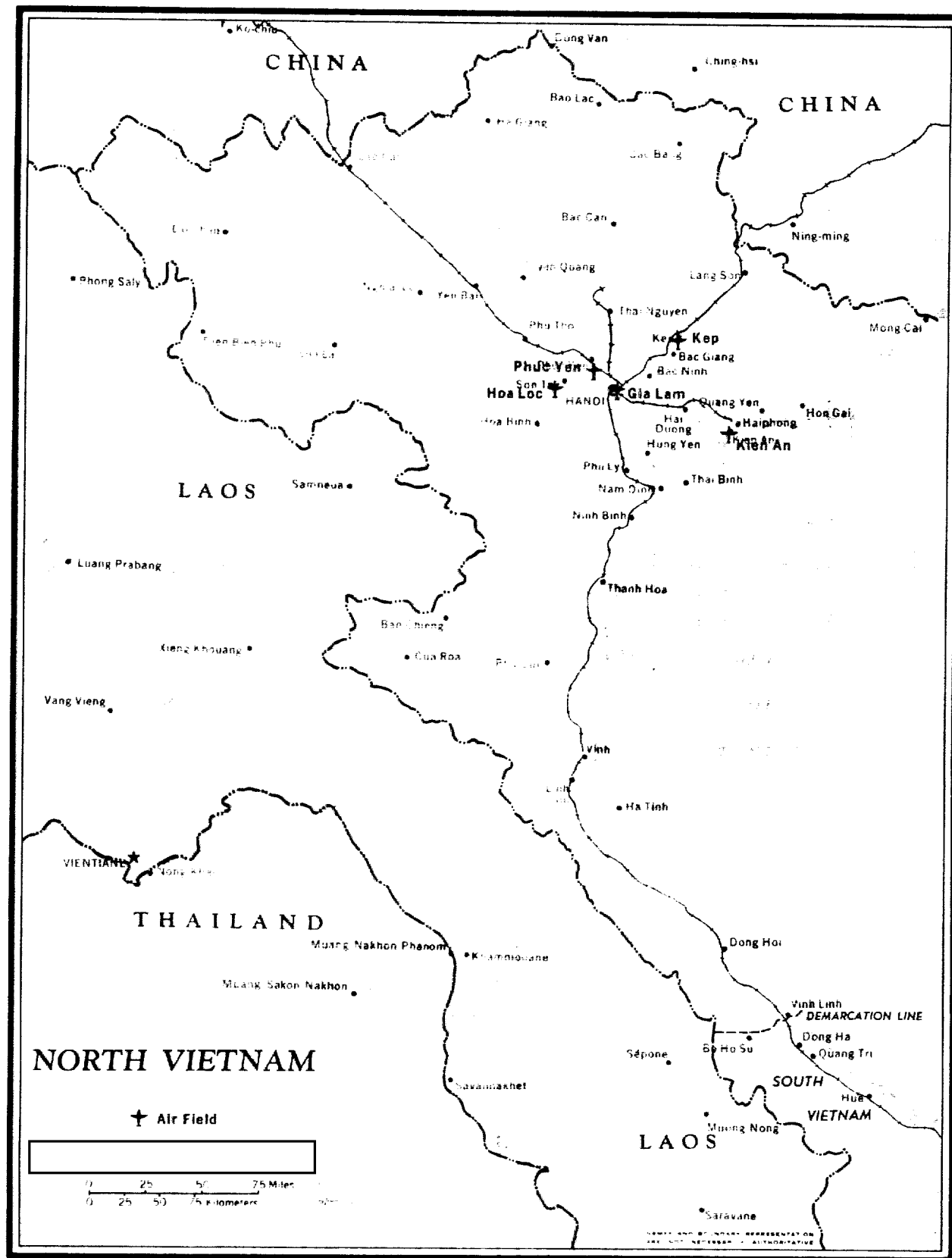
II. POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. Chief of State Thieu will inaugurate the government's National Reconciliation Program at a ceremony this Saturday marking the promulgation of the new constitution. Originally outlined at the Manila Conference last fall, the program is designed basically as an appeal to the Viet Cong to give up their Communist allegiance and enjoy the rights of South Vietnamese citizens under the new constitution.

2. The draft of the GVN communiqué holds out to the enemy the opportunity to become integrated into Vietnamese society without discrimination on grounds of past allegiances. It does not, however, spell out the specific rights and benefits that the enemy can expect to receive, although the final communiqué may stipulate them. As it stands now, the proclamation might not appear to the Viet Cong to hold out much more than the present Chieu Hoi defector program. National Reconciliation is being offered, however, in "the spirit of the constitution" with its concomitant guarantees, and with a prospect of employment opportunities "in accordance with ability."

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III. NORTH VIETNAMESE MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS

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NVA Prisoner on Desertions

4. A captured POW has reported a relatively high desertion rate for his infiltration group-- while the group was still in North Vietnam. The source claims that out of his company of 110 men [redacted] that infiltrated in February 1966, five deserted before they left the DRV; none deserted after their arrival in the South. There have been reports of Communist desertions from infiltration groups in both Laos and South Vietnam, but there has been almost no information on desertions in the North.

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5. The high desertion rate reported for this group is probably not typical of North Vietnamese units. Although the source was not able to generalize about desertions outside of his own experience, his statements imply that desertion is not a serious problem in the DRV. He had never heard of any desertions on the part of either NCOs or officers.

6. Strict population controls in the DRV make the recovery of deserters comparatively easy. The army merely notifies the authorities in the soldier's home village to pick the man up as soon as he returns. There is no penalty for desertion the first time, and the second offense involves only a sentence of from one to six months hard labor plus intensive political indoctrination.

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IV. OTHER COMMUNIST MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS

1. There is nothing significant to report.

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V. COMMUNIST POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

1. Peking's first public reference to UN Secretary General Thant's new proposal for a settlement in Vietnam came in a Chinese domestic service broadcast on 30 March. The broadcast quoted the DRV Foreign Ministry spokesman's rejection of the U Thant plan on 27 March and repeated Peking's insistence that the Vietnam problem "has nothing to do with the UN."

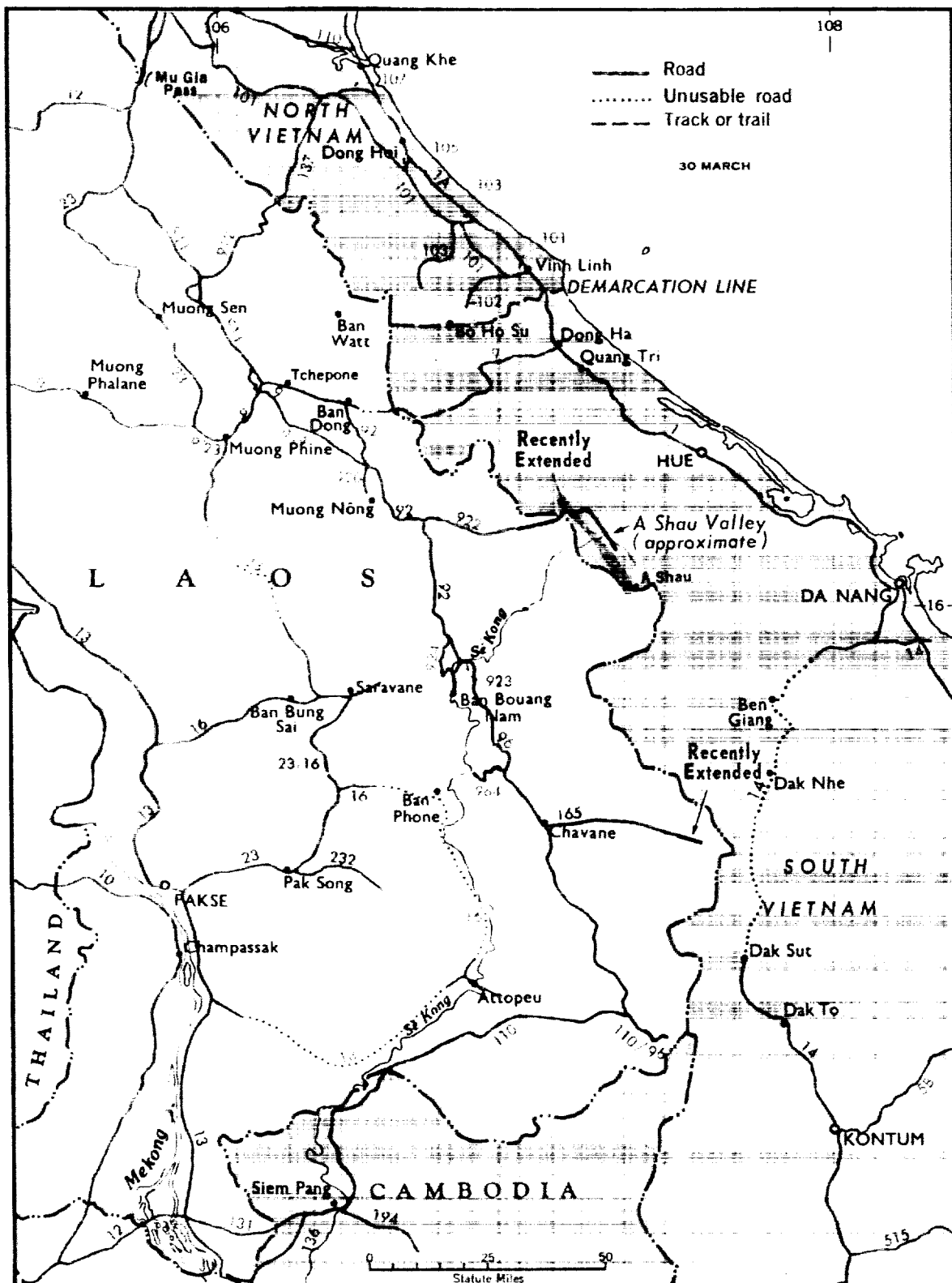
2. Peking has repeatedly castigated U Thant for his previous efforts to bring about a Vietnam solution. The broadcast will probably be followed by more detailed Peking criticism of the secretary general's plan.

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LAOS PANHANDLE



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VI. OTHER MAJOR ASPECTS

1. Photography [] has confirmed reports by aerial observers that Route 922 in the Laos panhandle has been extended into South Vietnam. The Communists now have a motorable road for carrying supplies from North Vietnam into Thua Thien Province in South Vietnam.

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2. Route 922 now extends some ten miles into South Vietnam and then turns south toward the A Chau Valley following an old trail. There is as yet no indication how far the Communists intend to extend the road.

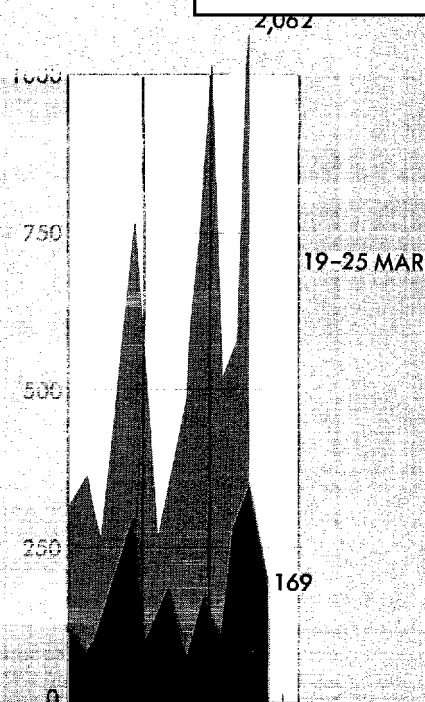
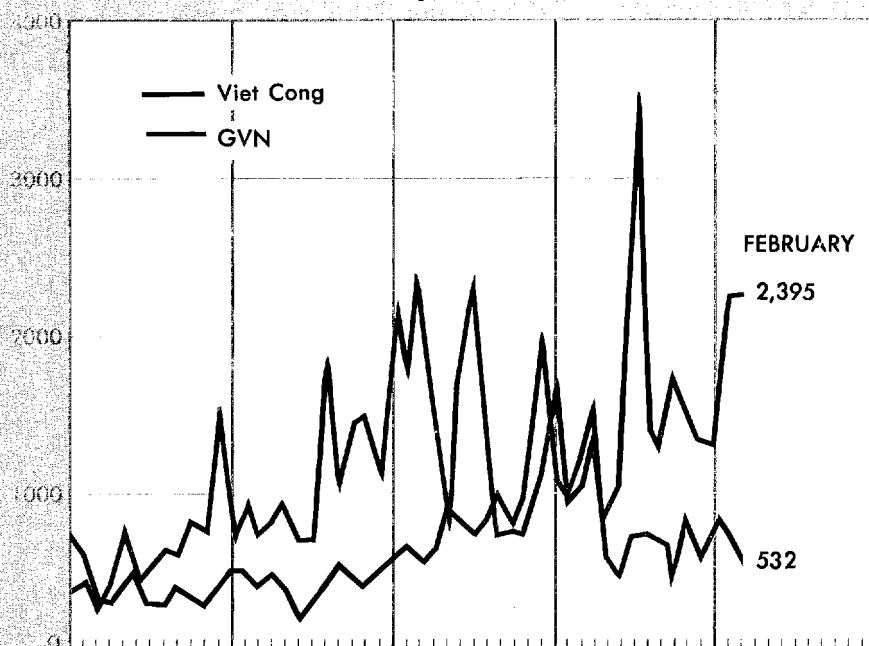
3. Route 922 is one of four roads in the Laos panhandle road network that run toward the South Vietnamese border region. One of the others--Route 165--has also recently been extended closer to the South Vietnamese border, but as of mid-March, according to air observers, was still about seven miles short of the border.

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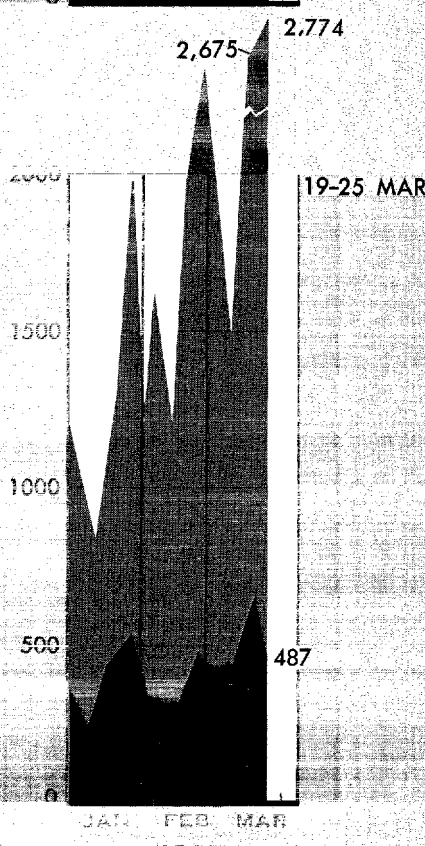
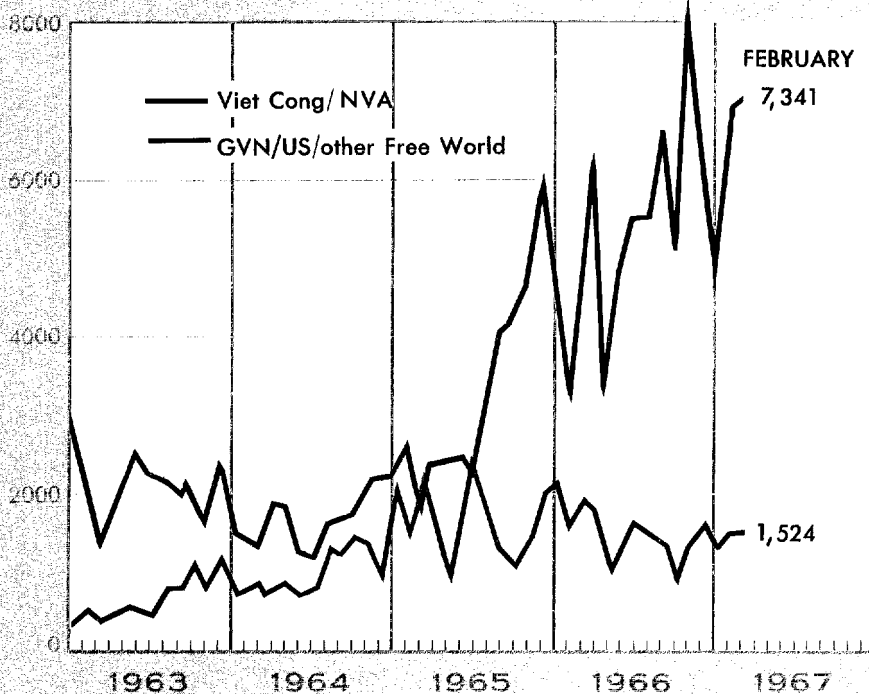
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Weapons Losses



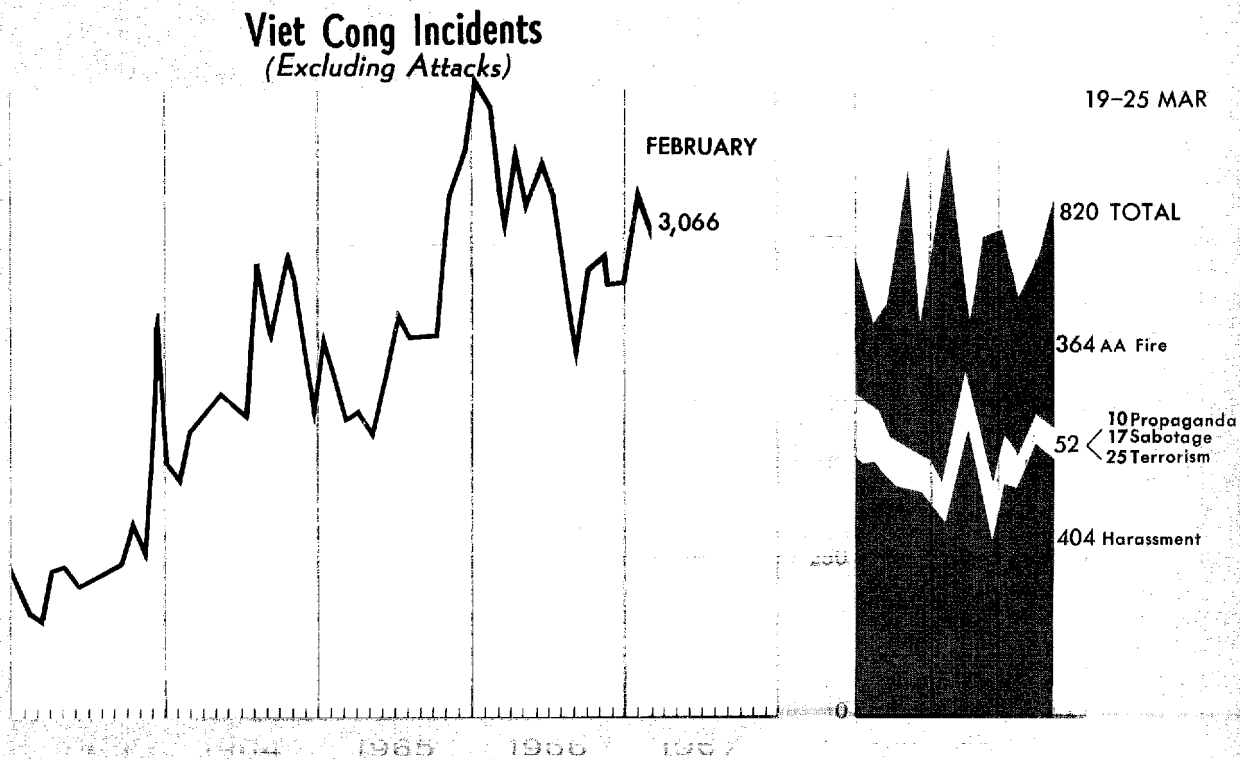
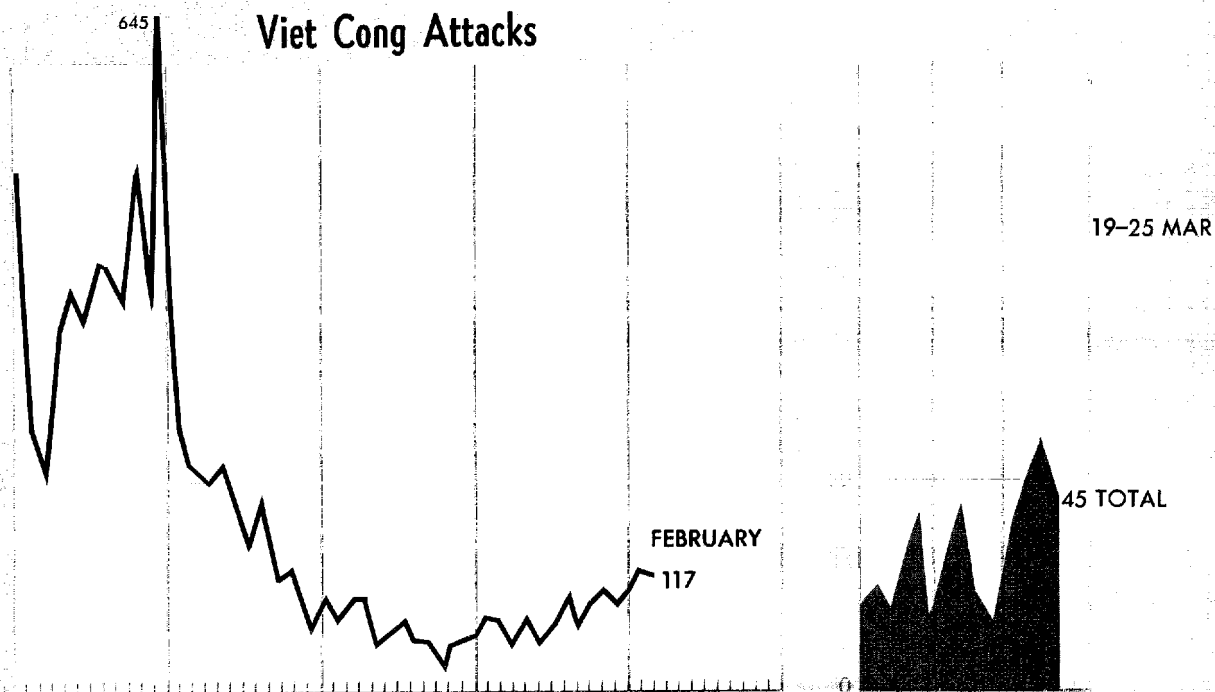
Personnel Losses (Killed only)*



US Casualties to Date: Killed 8,152 Wounded 47,286 Captured 145 Missing 384

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* Due to a change in the reporting of personnel losses, beginning 12 February 1967, the weekly figure will represent only personnel killed.



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